

Message Text

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FOR VAKY FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, BL

SUBJECT: BOLIVIAN ELECTION FRAUD

REF: STATE 177348

I CONVEYED THE MESSAGE IN REFTEL THIS MORNIG TO FOREIGN MINISTER GENERAL ADRIAZOLA, WHOM BANZER ASKED ME TO SEE IN HIS STEAD, PLEADING A FULL SCHEDULE OF POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS. I HAD A SURPRISINGLY GOOD AND FRANK SESSION WITH ADRIAZOLA. HE TOOK OUR MESSAGE STOICALLY, REVIEWED HIS OWN ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT MESS, AND ASKED WHAT WE WANTED THE GOVERNMENT TO DO NOW.

HE SAID THE CURRENT MESS HAD RESULTED FROM MANY MISTAKES. BANZER PICKED THE WRONG MAN TO RUN AND NEVER SHOULD HAVE MADE THIS DECISION HIMSELF. THE CANDIDATE SHOULD HAVE BEEN A CIVILIAN AND WITHOUT THE MILITARY LABEL THE CONTINUITY CANDIDATE WOULD HAVE WON A CLEAN MAJORITY. PEREDA'S UNP WAS A SET OF INITIALS AND NO MORE WHEREAS SILES ZUAZO'S UDP WAS A MILITANT, EFFICIENT POLITICAL MACHINE. THE THREE OPPOSITION PARTIES HAD NOW FORGED AN IDEALOGICALLY ARTIFICIAL ALLIANCE. A CLEAN-UP OF FRAUDULENT VOTES COULD WELL REDUCE

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PEREDA'S VOTE TO 45 O/O TO 50 O/O. THEREFORE, THE MILITARY WAS FACED WITH A CHOICE OF PEREDA WITH AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY BY HOOK OR CROOK OR A "RADICAL LEFFIST" GOVERNMENT OF SILES ZUAZO. THE LATTER WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE MILITARY AND THE FORMER WOULD PRODUCE A FATALLY WEAK GOVERNMENT. SO WHAT DID THE U.S. WANT THE GOVERNMENT TO DO?

I REPLIED THAT I HAD TO PREFACE THAT ANSWER WITH MY OWN PERSONAL ANALYSIS OF THE MESS. A THOROUGH CLEAN-UP OF THE VOTING RESULT WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE IT WAS RIGHT, IT IS WHAT THE CONSTITUTION REQUIRED AND WHAT THE BOLIVIAN PEOPLE HAD A RIGHT TO EXPECT. IT WAS ALSO ESSENTIAL POLITICALLY TO AVOID A DANGEROUS POLARIZATION OF BOLIVIAN POLITICS AND THE FATALLY WEAK GOVERNMENT HE FEARED. IT WAS THE ISSUE OF ELECTORAL FRAUD AND THE CONVICTION THAT PAZ AND BERNAL HAD BEEN ROBBED WHICH WAS UNITING THE OPPOSITION PARTIES. UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ELECTORAL COURT TOOK THIS ISSUE HEAD ON AND COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO A THOROUGH CLEAN UP, THIS ALLIANCE WOULD HOLD AND THERE COULD BE NO RESOLUTION OF THE DILEMMA AS HE DESCRIBED IT. THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEREDA FORCES HAD CREATED THE SOURCE OF THIS DILEMMA, FRAUD, AND THEY HAD TO RESOLVE IT IN A FAIR WAY OR POLARIZATION AND CONFRONTATION WERE INEVITABLE. WHAT WE WANTED, AND WHAT BOLIVIA NEEDED, WAS A CLEAR MANDATE TO THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COURT TO ANNUL ALL THE SUSPECT VOTES IT COULD FIND.

ADRIAZOLA SAID HE AGREED WITH THIS ANALYSIS, BUT IT WOULD WORK ONLY IF THE MILITARY WERE SURE THAT A COALITION COULD EMERGE. PEREDA HAD GOTTEN AT LEAST 45 O/O OF THE VOTES BY ANY STANDARD AND MAYBE EVEN A MAJORITY. HE HAD THE RIGHT TO FORM THE NEW GOVERNMENT. BUT PEREDA COULD BE TOO WICK TO SAVE HIMSELF. ADRIAZOLA SAID THAT WHEN BERNAL WAS APPROACHED ON A POSSIBLE COALITION, 48 HOURS AGO, HE REPLIED
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THAT HE WOULD DEAL ONLY WITH BANZER. I REITERATED THAT I THOUGH FLEXIBILITY AND MODERATION IN BOLIVIAN POLITICS COULD BE PERSERVED ONLY IF A CONSCIENTIOUS EFFORT WERE MADE TO ELIMATE FRAUD FROM THE ELCTORAL RESULT.

ADRIAZOLA SAID HE WOULD CONVEY TODAY TO BANZER OUR WARNING, MY ANALYSIS, AND OUR REQUEST.

I HAD A CHANCE TO TALK TO INTERIOR MINISTER JIMENEZ TODAY AS WELL. I GOT NOWHERE WITH HIM. HE DECLINED TO RECOGNIZE SERIOUS FRAUD, SAID IT WAS PEREDA ALONE OR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM AND GENERALLY REFLECTED THE HARDENING PINOCHET-LIKE ATTITUDE OF MANY OF THE GENERALS. JIMENEZ ALSO CLAIMED THAT BANZER'S OPEN LETTER YESTERDAY TO THE ELECTORAL COURT (ASKING THEM TO ACCELERATE THE COUNT AND DO THEIR JOB) WAS ALL THE BACKING THE COURT NEEDED.

COMMENT: IF BANZER'S THINKING IS AT ALL SIMILAR TO ADRIAZOLA'S A REASONABLE RESULT MAY STILL BE POSSIBLE, IF THE GENERALS CAN OVERCOME THEIR SLAP AT THE POLLS AND THEIR PARANOIC REACTION TO IT.
BOEKER

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